
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2017

by J Gilbert MA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 20th July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/17/3170781
12 South Grove, Wymington NN10 9LR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr K Buckingham against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01956/OUT, dated 2 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of two dwellings attached to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The proposal seeks outline permission. Details of the proposed access, layout and scale have been provided, with appearance and landscaping matters reserved for future consideration.

Main Issue

3. Having considered all of the evidence before me, including the representations of third parties, I consider that the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Located within Wymington's settlement boundary, South Grove is a residential street of predominantly two-storey semi-detached housing in spacious plots, with a small number of rows of between 4 and 6 terraced houses. The street has a number of short arms with prominent open street corners in the form of the front, side and rear gardens of mainly semi-detached properties. The open street corners are a key element of the character of South Grove. The appeal site is on one of these street corners along the street's central spine and is visible from a number of the arms of South Grove.
 5. No 12 South Grove is a two-storey semi-detached corner property with an attached single-storey outbuilding and informal parking area on the site's frontage and within the side garden. The proposal would elongate the established building line by introducing 2 houses abutting No 12. The gable wall of the end house would be approximately 1 metre from the site's side boundary. This would remove the characteristic green space between the
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- houses and the road. I consider that this would alter the spacious and open nature of the corner site, harming rather than respecting or enhancing the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
6. Furthermore, the proposed layout of the existing dwelling and the two new dwellings would involve the subdivision of the large garden of No 12 into 3 separate smaller gardens with cycle and bin storage and four parking spaces for the new dwellings. Although smaller gardens may be in keeping with modern needs, this division of the plot into three parcels would be in marked contrast to the surrounding properties. It would result in a cramped form of development at odds with the character and appearance of the area.
 7. Although the new dwellings would be sited along the same building line as the existing dwelling, the plot widths for the proposed dwellings would not be consistent with neighbouring properties. The introduction of two narrower dwellings would not relate well to the rhythm of the street scene, where semi-detached houses or wider terraced houses are the dominant house types.
 8. I note that planning permission has been granted for further dwellings adjacent to Nos 22 and 46. These sites lie at the end of arms of South Grove and are not located on the prominent green and open street corners along South Grove's central spine. Consequently, these planning permissions are significantly different to the appeal proposal and do not justify the harm I have identified.
 9. In addition to concerns raised by neighbours regarding the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, I am aware of their misgivings regarding pressure on kerbside parking; highway safety and the free flow of traffic; overlooking; and property values. While I have had regard to these matters insofar as they are planning matters, they have not led me to any different overall conclusion.
 10. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to policies BE29, BE30, BE37, H24 and H38 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan (2002), policy CP21 of the Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and design code N3 of the Council's adopted Supplementary Design Guidance: Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments (2000). In combination, these policies seek to secure high quality design, which takes account of local character and distinctiveness. While I understand that the site is within a Settlement Policy Area, in which residential development is considered acceptable in principle, my findings above lead me to conclude that there is conflict with the development plan as a whole.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Gilbert

INSPECTOR